

THE WASHINGTON MEDAL



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The enemy's first flight — Washington, on Dorchester Heights, watches over the British evacuation of Boston, 17 March 1776

THE WASHINGTON MEDAL

In Commemoration of the

Evacuation of Boston

17 March 1776



An Essay by

Howard Payson Arnold

The Associates of the Boston Public Library

MCMLXXVI

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FOREWORD

WHEN A CENTURY ago the City of Boston celebrated the centennial of its evacuation by British forces, a high-point was the presentation to the city of what has come to be designated as the Washington Medal. Deposited in the Boston Public Library, it is for many a numismatist that institution's principal claim to fame. In itself the medal has incalculable historical and emotional connotations, and it is, moreover, the prototype of all subsequent Congressional Medals of Honor with which the nation has sought to reward, at least symbolically, its heroes.

That the medal rests in Boston is due to the civic spirit of a group of citizens who contributed to a fund for its purchase from a member of the Washington family whom the misfortunes of the Civil War had forced to part with it yet shared the belief that Boston was its proper home.

Received though the medal was with gratitude and appreciation, not every Bostonian has looked upon it with awe. In 1901 a Boston antiquarian, in fact, saw fit to publish privately his doubts about its merits under the title *The Evolution of the Boston Medal*. In doing so the author justified himself by quoting on his title page one of the city's revered figures, Thomas Wentworth Higginson: "The truth of history is a sacred thing."

Whether or not the umbrella of this quotation shielded the author, Howard Payson Arnold, from the wrath of his readers, we do not know. The fact remains that his essay is crotchety, at best, to the point of perverseness, and one might well question the wisdom of giving it wider currency by here reprinting it. Yet, notwithstanding his distorted interpretations of his evidence,

Arnold does provide information about the background of the medal not otherwise readily available. And in another sense he displays, albeit in exaggerated form, a continuing facet of Boston character not altogether discreditable: a questioning spirit that hesitates to accept things at face value, and a reluctance to be fobbed off with facile though flattering interpretations of the past. And the shadowy aspects of history — the persistence of human frailty — even lend it at times greater substance for us, and provide a fuller understanding of both it and ourselves, giving a deeper dimension to the achievements of past generations.

In belittling, as in effect Arnold does, the Washington Medal, he himself exhibits a curious lack of perspective, and in emphasizing Washington's seeming indifference to the medal may be all too provincial in outlook. As a Bostonian Arnold rather ignores the fact that for Washington his successful campaign in New England was but a relatively minor affair, however important it has appeared to Bostonians themselves. True, Boston gave Washington a boon companion in Henry Knox, the bookseller who became a general and later his Secretary of War, and the town accorded him an enthusiastic and memorable reception when he visited it in 1789, despite the boorish behaviour of John Hancock who as Governor of the state felt that Washington should first pay him a courtesy call, rather than the reverse.

Much else in Arnold's essays requires amendment. That a sketch of the medal accompanied the letter to Humphreys from the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, as asserted by Arnold, is not supported by the text itself. And though the profile of Washington may derive from Houdon, C. W. Peale remains a possible source. But who was responsible for Duvivier's accurate view of Dorchester Heights and of Boston Harbor we do not yet know. It is a matter that challenges exploration.

When Arnold raises a query regarding the fate of the "die" which he believed it Duvivier's "duty to deliver" he was particularly contentious, and ignored — despite his pretensions to research in this country and abroad — evidence close at hand that should have tempered his statements. The dies, or counter-punches, were

in due course made available for the production of the medal not in gold but in silver, of which Arnold makes no mention. From them and from those for ten other comparable commemorative medals commissioned during the course of the Revolution, a set in silver (presumably at the instance of the Marquis de Lafayette) was also executed and also presented to Washington. This set, inherited by Bushrod Washington, was acquired by Daniel Webster, and following the latter's death by his friend Peter Harvey who in 1874 presented it to the Massachusetts Historical Society.

If the current Bicentennial commemorations, with what on occasions appear to be distortions of the past and their commercialization of the nation's heritage, tempt one to protest, Arnold's essay may well serve as a warning, a fine example of the faults to which one may oneself succumb. In attempting to spike the ceremonial canons of tribute and respect, he resorted to mere tacks, captiously employed, in which his insinuations regarding the authenticity and the metallic content of the medal scarcely merit comment.

It remains for us to recognize within ourselves the significance of the Washington Medal. That the privations and hardships of the bitter winter of 1775-1776 were real, and the expulsion of the British from Boston a military triumph in which Henry Knox played a crucial part, we need not deny. But both must be viewed in the light of subsequent events of the Revolution itself. For the Continental Congress to attach the importance it did to the evacuation of Boston by honoring Washington bestows only reflected glory upon it. Nor should we forget that in expelling the British from Boston, the colonists sought no more than what they believed were their own rights as British subjects. Yet we can be no less than grateful to that group of Bostonians who a century ago contributed to the purchase of the Washington Medal, evoking as it does for us an association with a General and a President whose stature remains unassailed. It is only fitting that we recall again the gift and givers.

John Alden

THE TRANSMITTAL OF THE WASHINGTON MEDAL

The large gold Medal presented to Washington, by Congress, for his services in expelling the British forces from Boston on the 17th of March, 1776, having remained in the Washington family for a hundred years, is now, owing to the circumstances of the immediate owner, privately offered for sale. The undersigned, feeling deeply that such a memorial should be among the most cherished treasures of our city, and should certainly go nowhere else, hereby agree to be responsible to an amount not exceeding one hundred dollars each, for the purchase of the Medal, to be presented to the City of Boston, and preserved forever in the Boston Public Library.

December 1875.

Robert C. Winthrop	S. D. Warren	George W. Wales
John Amory Lowell	Nathaniel J. Bradlee	E. R. Mudge
W. Amory	J. Ingersoll Bowditch	William W. Tucker
John L. Gardner	Henry L. Pierce	Henry G. Denny
Samuel C. Cobb	T. G. Appleton	James L. Little
Robert M. Mason	William Appleton	P. C. Brooks
Charles Francis Adams	William Endicott, Jr.	Sidney Brooks
Otis Norcross	Charles Faulkner	Isaac Thacher
N. Thayer	Henry Lee	Henry A. Whitney
Cora F. Shaw	William S. Appleton	Richard C. Greenleaf
Martin Brimmer	Mary Brewer	Thomas Wigglesworth
William Gaston	C. A. Brewer	Alvah A. Burrage
Edward Austin	George C. Richardson	Alexander H. Rice
Abbott Lawrence	Amos A. Lawrence	James Davis
H. P. Kidder	Eben D. Jordan	E. B. Bigelow
James Parker	Walter Hastings	Charles Whitney
H. H. Hunnewell	J. Huntington Wolcott	

THE EVOLUTION OF THE BOSTON MEDAL

THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, by vote passed on the 25th of March, 1776, decreed a gold medal to General Washington to commemorate his "wise and spirited conduct in the siege and acquisition of Boston."

For various reasons, not the least of which was the lack of money, nothing was done for several years towards carrying this vote into execution and the matter seemed to have been forgotten, except by Washington, who, though he said nothing, in his heart felt much mortified by the neglect. As he wrote to Col. Humphreys, his friend and aide-de-camp,

"My Dear Humphreys, I thank you for your attention to the medal which was voted for me by Congress. I expected it was to have remained on the journals of that honorable Body as a dead letter, and never having hinted,—so I never intended to hint, my knowledge of such a vote, or my apprehension of the effect of it, to any one in power or in office.

G. WASHINGTON.

"Mount Vernon. 1st September, 1785."¹

This is the only reference to the medal to be found in any of Washington's writings, and it is interesting as a proof that at that date he had not forgotten it and that he did attach a certain importance to the honor it implied, however little he seemed to regard it subsequently.

In the course of nearly ten years after the vote had been passed, a conviction gradually arose of the scanty and tardy justice that had been done to Washington and to several of his companions in arms, and Robert Morris, the "Superintendent of Finance" from 1781 to 1784, was requested to see that this reward for honorable

service was procured for Washington, as well as several others that had been similarly granted by Congress. This charge, which was to be executed in Paris, was entrusted by Morris to Col. David Humphreys, above mentioned, who had just been appointed by Congress Secretary of the "Commissioners for negotiating treaties of Commerce with foreign Powers." These Commissioners were Franklin, Adams (both of whom had already been some years abroad) and Jefferson, who was soon to join them. Humphreys sailed from New York on the 15th of July, 1784, and reached Paris in the ensuing September. He seems to have had no especial instructions concerning the memorials from Morris, certainly not in writing, and the whole matter was left pretty much to his own discretion. In fact he acted throughout as if he were accountable to no one and did not send a report even to his superior.

Humphreys was one of those companionable, popular, kaleidoscopic characters that now and then appear for the amusement and decoration of the world at large, but who rarely betray much depth or application for serious business. However, with the help of tact, good nature, general intelligence, a ready wit and many glittering accomplishments, he had achieved a certain success and a position in the country that kept him always before the people and in the line of possible promotion. His war record had done him honor and Washington was sincerely attached to him, having given him, besides other marks of favor, the epaulettes he wore at Yorktown. In various quarters he was thought to be a poet and he really possessed a faculty, not so common in those days as now, for the copious production of heroics, patriotic and other. His *vers de société*, humorous and sparkling, had made him widely known and so had his "Yankee in England" and other printed facetiae, while his "Address to the Armies of the United States" had even been translated into excellent French by the Chevalier de Chastellux, with subsequent approval of royalty itself.² He had also added his tributary laurel to "Death-daring Putnam." In 1787, when Harvard bestowed its LL.D. upon Jefferson and Thomas Brand Hollis, its honorary A.M. was conferred upon Humphreys, possibly through the influence of Jefferson,

upon whom he had contrived to obtain a "pull", as he did upon almost every one with whom he came in contact and who could advance his interests.³

Moreover, Col. Humphreys was indebted to Dartmouth College for the higher preferment of an LL.D. and Brown bestowed the same. He was, likewise, a Fellow of the American Academy and even of the Royal Society — an exceptional distinction at that time, which he owed to the friendship of Sir Joseph Banks and, indirectly, to the sea serpent whose claims to existence he had always persistently advocated in a way that suggested the early ages of serpent worship.

In spite of these plausible and seductive endowments, Humphreys had his limitations, and as he had never been in Paris, or anywhere else outside of his own country; as he could neither write nor speak French; as he had no diplomatic experience and was altogether unfamiliar with the forms and the phrases of diplomacy or with the manners and the habits of diplomats, it is quite manifest that he was ill-fitted for his office as Secretary of the new Commission. Franklin described him as "a gentleman who, though he might have a good deal of military merit, certainly had none in the diplomatic line, and had neither the French language, nor the experience, nor the address proper to qualify him for such an employment."⁴

If the qualifications of Humphreys as secretary were so limited, those that were needed for his other mission were still less manifest. He had no particular insight or acumen; no natural taste; no knowledge of art or of any of its processes, mechanical or other; no faculty, in short, that would help him towards rendering an intelligent and authoritative opinion upon a single feature of a medal or of any other work of art.⁵ Those facts were very soon apparent to the members of the Academy, and if it had not been for the powerful influence of Lafayette, to whom Washington had given Humphreys a letter of introduction, the latter would have found his progress much slower than it was and his scheme would have received a scanty welcome from a body who cared little or nothing for its object. It was to Lafayette that he chiefly

owed such consideration as was paid him and his aid was really essential in preparing the petition to the Academy and other papers. Lafayette was the most tenacious and forceful link in the chain that connected the two countries and his intimate attachment to, and admiration for, Washington doubled its strength, while it also spurred him to farther efforts in behalf of any undertaking that was to promote his fame.

The Colonel was in no hurry to begin his official duties, but lavishly curtailed his term at each end. He sailed from New York, July 16, 1784, and reached Paris early in September, more than three months after his appointment. He left that city in November, 1785, in order to make a long stay in London previous to his departure for America, six months later. He had been in Paris seven months before making his application to the Academy.

After the arrival of Humphreys in Paris one would suppose that in the course of a few weeks, at least, he would begin his work in behalf of the various memorials and especially of the Boston medal. For this purpose he would naturally first of all invoke the kind offices of Franklin and Adams. The former was a "Boston boy," who had always displayed a peculiar attachment to his native city and had eagerly favored any plan for her celebrity and honor. Adams, too, was hardly less than a "Boston boy" and had been prominently identified with her patriotic deeds and her historic fame. He also had a personal interest in the medal, for it was voted by Congress after an eloquent speech by him announcing the fall of Boston, followed by his motion that such a memorial ought to be presented to its conqueror. Moreover, both of these fellow-citizens of Humphreys were well known in Paris by all classes, including the most learned, illustrious and influential. They were familiar with the language and could have lent most powerful aid to any cause that they might favor. This was especially true of Franklin, whose scientific distinction was no less than his diplomatic and political, and whose position as a member of the Academy of Sciences gave him far more prestige than to Adams. Yet it is a fact that neither of these representatives of Boston had anything to do with the evolution of the medal,

from the first steps to the last. This was more conspicuous in the case of Franklin, whose conduct must have been peculiarly demoralizing among his friends and admirers in the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres. Of course, they could not have been expected to display much enthusiasm in favor of a project which was entirely ignored by a savant of such fame and who was born in the very same town most concerned in the honor sought.⁶

The cause of this peculiar attitude of Franklin is easy to discover. Col. Humphreys was not a "persona grata" to him and never could be under any circumstances, nor could Franklin ever undertake to favor any project in which he was concerned. He was an embodied grievance and Franklin was not magnanimous enough to ignore his own pique and sense of personal wrong, even in an affair that should have strongly appealed to every sentiment of public spirit and patriotism. Col. Humphreys had obtained the very position that Franklin had exerted himself to secure for his grandson, William Temple Franklin, a claim to which he thought himself to possess a sort of prescriptive right. For seven years the latter had been his secretary on a salary of only 700 livres per annum, and ever since the spring of 1781 Franklin had persistently pressed his demands for something better. His grandson was well fitted for the office of chargé d'affaires, for secretary in various capacities, or for other diplomatic duties, as Franklin stated, "on the grounds of his probity, his genteel address, sagacity and judgment, and for his facility in speaking French." These gifts would have made him equal to the demands of almost any diplomatic station, yet the only reply to Franklin's appeal was the arrival of Col. David Humphreys, who knew nothing about his business and whose chief rôle thus far had been that of one perpetually "in need of some provision"; a political tramp. It is hardly surprising that Franklin gave the impecunious Colonel the cold shoulder and bitterly thought of his own exertion in behalf of his country and his life-long sacrifices of all that men hold dear.⁷

For reasons not very obvious, Humphreys made but slow progress in his work on the Congressional memorials and it was

more than six months after he reached Paris before any fruit of his exertion was visible. As to this part of his mission only two sources of evidence apparently now exist, one is in the Journal of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, and the other in a letter from Humphreys to Washington, now on file in the Department of State, Vol. 67, page 295, "Letters to Washington." Both of these I have copied in extenso.

The Academy Journals are scanty, superficial and in every way unsatisfactory. They offer but little aid to one looking for the inception of the Boston medal, but they must be used for lack of anything better, and as they are the principal means now available. We learn from the description of the Séance of April 22nd, 1785, that the whole subject was "bien discuté," but there is very little proof of this assertion, so little, in truth, as to make it very clear that nothing will ever be known as to the particular share of anyone in this discussion, or as to the reasons, if reasons there were, that led to the choice of the commonplace design and legend that now appear on the Washington medal. One thing is evident — the matter did not greatly interest the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, though this might have been foreseen, as its members would naturally be less attracted by military affairs, than by those connected with literature and science.⁸ Moreover, it was all a novelty to them and quite outside any former experience. They had not been in the habit of providing devices and legends for foreign nations. Hence at the four meetings where the project was presented it received but slight attention and the members were only too glad, after some superficial discussion, to revive an old and abandoned custom and refer the whole to a committee of four.

From the testimony of the Academy records Washington seems to have been but a vague personality at best, "une quantité négligeable." The members did not even give him the title of General and apparently no more importance (if as much) was attached to him than to "les officiers Généraux, le Général Gates et le Général Green," as these were invariably termed. They did not even know how to spell the name of the hero whom they had

been asked to honor, at least so far as can be inferred from their Journals. At their hands he fared indifferently as "M. Wasting-ton," "M. Wasinghton" and "Georgio Wasinghon." They did not happen to hit it right in a single instance.⁹ For these blunders there was not the least excuse, as Col. Humphreys had given them Washington's name in his letter. It all really arose from their utter indifference. Luckily at the last moment a "Deus ex machina" appeared and relieved the situation, so that "Wasinghon" was not engraved on the medal.

On the whole we must admit that the combined wisdom and intelligence of these luminaries failed to produce any notable result, except a display of bad Latin. The prosy array of monotonous facts which they elaborated for an inscription suggest nothing but perfunctory incompetence and lack of taste, while as to the design, it was hardly necessary to apply to the élite of France for a device that could have been produced by any artist of average talent.

"Registre des Assemblées et délibérations de l'Académie royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres pendant l'année, 1785.

Séance du 8 Avril, 1785.

Messieurs De l'Averdy—honoraire.

Barthélémy, De Sigrais, De Guignes, Dupuy, Gaillard, Bejot, Davier—Pensionnaires.

Anguetil, Ameilhon, Bouchaud, De Sibert, De Rochefort, Desormeaux, Le Blond, Dusaulx, Larcher, De Keralio, Brotier, Auger, Vauvilliers—Associés.

D. Poirier, Mongey, Camus—Associés libres Résidents.

M. le Secrétaire a fait part d'une lettre de M. Humphreys, ancien colonel au service des Etats-Unis, par laquelle il demande trois médailles pour M. Wastington, le Général Gates et le Général Green. Il envoie en meme temps des renseignements sur les actions de ces trois personnes.

L'Académie a remis à la huitaine pour s'occuper de ces trois médailles.

Séance du 19 Avril.

On a proposé ensuite, vu le temps qu'on perd en faisant des Inscriptions et des Médailles dans les Séances de l'Académie, de reprendre l'ancien usage de les faire par Commissionaires.

Il a décidé à la pluralité des voix qu'à l'avenir on nommeroit des Commissionaires, comme on le faisoit par le passé.

Après ces différents arrangements, on s'est occupé des Médailles demandées par le Congrès d'Amerique, et l'on a invités Mrs les Académiciens à apporter des projets pour ces Médailles à la première Séance dans laquelle on est convenu de nommer des commissionaires pour rédiger ces Médailles.

Séance du 22 Avril.

Messieurs

Barthélémy, De Sigrais, De Guignes, Dupuy, Gaillard, Garnier, Bejot, Dacier—Pensionnaires.

Anquetil, Ameilhon, Bouchaud, De Sibert, De Rochefort, Le Roy, Desormeaux, Le Blond, Dusaulx, Larcher, Guénée, De Keralio, Brotier, Auger, Vauvilliers, Houard—Associés.

M. Dacier—

Il a fait ensuite la lecture des projets des trois Médailles pour les trois Officers Généraux Américains. Apres les avoir bien discutés, on a nommé pour les terminer Mrs Barthélémy, Dupuy, Brotier, Le Blond.

Séance du 20 Avril.

M. le Secrétaire lut ensuite les sujets des médailles demandées par le Congrès pour trois officers Généraux.

Pour M. Wasinghton

D'un côté sa tête.

Légende,

Georgio Wasinghon Supremo Duci exerituum,
adsertori Libertatis.

Exergue,

Comitia Americana.

Revers.,

La prise de Boston, l'armée angloise fuyant vers le rivage
pour s'embarquer etc.,

Légende, Hostibus, ou Anglis, primum Fugatis.

Exergue.

Bostonium recuperatum die 17 Martii, anno 1776.

From the Letters to Washington, Vol. 67, pp. 295-6, Department of State:

Paris, May, 1785.

My Dear General:—

... Upon my leaving America Mr. Morris invested me with the power of procuring the several honorary presents which had been voted by Congress to different officers in their service during the late War — The Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, to whom I addressed a letter on the subject,¹⁰ have furnished me with the following device and inscription for the Gold Medal which is to be executed for your excellency—

“On one side the head of the General. Legend:

Georgio Washington supremo Duci Exercituum adsertori Libertatis Comitia Americana. On the reverse: Taken [sic] possession of Boston. The American Army advances in good order towards the town which is seen at a distance, while the British army flies with precipitation towards the shore to embark on board the vessels with which the harbour is covered. In the front of the American Army appears the General on horse-back in a group of Officers, whom he seems to make observe the flight of the enemy.

Legend: Hostibus primo fugatis.

Exergue:—Bostonium, recuperatum die XVII Martii, MDCCCLXXVI.”

I think it has the character of simplicity and dignity which is to be aimed at in a memorial of this kind, which is designed to transmit the remembrance of a great event to posterity. You really do not know how much your name is venerated on this side of the Atlantic....

With my most respectful and affectionate regards to Mrs.

Washington and complts. to all the family,
I have the honor to be,
My Dear General,
Your sincere friend & h^{ble} serv^t,

D. HUMPHREYS.

General Washington.

From the contents of Col. Humphreys' letter to Washington, we learn that within a short time after its final vote had been passed, the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres had sent him a sketch of the medal for Washington taken from the description of its proposed design on their records, the details of which, as set forth by Humphreys, agree entirely with the original text now existing. This sketch must have been much larger, as it inevitably would be, than could have been portrayed on any medal. It is also indicated by Humphreys' comments, such as, "the American army advances in good order towards the town," "The British army flies with precipitation," and others quite as specific, though some allowance should be made for the expansion of a sanguine and vivid imagination. This sketch was doubtless intended not only for Humphreys, but for the use of the future engraver. As to its author, nothing will ever be known, since the Journals make no sign and the Academy never had any official draughtsman or painter whose duty it would be to prepare such a sketch. He was presumably employed merely for the occasion. Whoever he may have been, it was certainly not Duvivier, who ultimately engraved the medal, but who had nothing to do with it till some time later, when he abbreviated and condensed the sketch into the necessary space, and by means of his keen eye and skilful hand gave it such artistic value as it now possesses, the result being simply the clever adaptation, largely mechanical, of another's work. The bust is a masterpiece and was admirably and faithfully reduced from that by Houdon.¹¹ From all these facts we are driven to the conclusion that the medal has a four-fold parentage, and that it was finally evolved by the united efforts of the committee of four and the unknown author of the sketch,

together with Houdon and Duvivier. These were all more or less responsible. This intermixture may partly account for the fact that it is one of the least esteemed of Duvivier's works.

It was fortunate that the author of the sketch knew how to spell Washington's name and was sufficiently enlightened and considerate to alter its form from the various twists bestowed upon it by the Academicians.

I desire here to offer a short comment on the legend that was originally suggested for the reverse of the medal, as well as on that which it now bears. When four distinguished pundits put their heads together in order to elaborate a short Latin motto we may justly look for both accuracy and elegance, especially when one of them, like Brotier, not only claimed to be a Latinist of the first class, but had sought to prove it by bringing out an edition of the works of Tacitus, the most exact and polished of all the Roman writers. But these expectations are not realized in the case before us, at least in one instance, that of the use of the word "primum" in the phrase "hostibus primum fugatis." If this was intended to mean "for the first time," though not bad Latin, it was at least incorrect historically, for the enemy had already been beaten at Lexington and Concord and it was thus unfit for the destined use. So far as the language is concerned, however, and remembering that the word was not finally employed on the seal, the Academy is entitled to the benefit of the doubt, and we may admit for the moment that this might have been their intended meaning. It is all the more likely, since they knew little and cared less about the first struggles of a new republic, or, in truth, about anything else that had taken place outside their own country. Bound up in measureless conceit, it is not by any means incredible that they had never heard of Lexington or Concord, and thus thought the enemy had been discomfited "for the first time" at Boston and "primum" was therefore correct.¹²

If, however, the Academicians wished to signify, as there is good reason to believe they did, "after the enemy had been previously defeated," though the sense might have been sufficiently clear, the word "primum" would have been inelegant and redun-

dant and no Latin writer in good repute would have sanctioned such a use of it. But it was not destined to be used on the medal, for in some way when the legend reached Humphreys, it had been changed into "primo," as it now appears, and thus a bad matter had been made worse, for "primo" was not the right word under any aspect, either lingual or historic. It would be interesting to learn the exact reason for this alteration and the name of the author, but these will never be found out. The Journals fail to reveal any authority for such a translation on the part of the Academy, and the obvious conclusion is that it was done by the maker of the sketch sent to Humphreys, and that of his own motion, being quite indifferent as to the possible risk of detection and punishment. Whatever may be said of his Latin, there was at least the permanent and desirable advantage of the abbreviation of a word and the gain of a little space. If it had only occurred to him, he might have gained still more, for the right word was "prius"—"hostibus prius fugatis"—which is even shorter than "primo," though even that was unnecessary, for "hostibus fugatis" alone would have been good Latin and amply sufficient to express the same meaning, while the room obtained would have been relatively enormous. As to the use of "prius," it is remarkable that it did not dawn upon Brotier and his colleagues at the very beginning. Had they but given the matter thorough and scholarly examination, they could have found plenty of examples among the best Latin authors that would have quickly convinced them of their error. If we turn to Horace's Odes, IV, 15, 28, we find "Rite deos prius apprecati." In the annals of Tacitus we read, XII, 64, "Perdita prius Lepida." In the same work, XIII, 50, "Multum prius laudata magnitudine animi," and in XVI, 14, "Monito prius Anteis." But it would be futile to multiply examples. It is very odd that some of these did not suggest themselves, at least to Brotier, considering his relation to Tacitus. It is to be regretted that the artist, if he was an artist, did not make a far more sensible and profitable variation and substitute "Bostonia" for the "Bostonium" of the legend. The improvement would have been very obvious, for not only would still more space have been

gained, but a more melodious word and one more in accord with Latin taste and culture have been adopted, since the ending in "a" for Roman towns is much more common than that in "um." This will be quickly remembered, to say nothing of other instances, by every reader of Macaulay's Lays, where the former occurs at least twice as often as the latter. "Roma" itself seems to dominate the situation, while "Bostonia condita" on the city seal will at once present itself to every Bostonian.¹³

One would naturally infer that Humphreys after the receipt of the sketch for the Washington medal would forthwith have devoted all his energies to promote its completion, but this he did not think fit to do. On the contrary he seems to have given his first attention to the Gates and Greene memorials. An engraver was quickly secured for each of these and their work was urged forward with such energy that both their medals were nearly, or quite, done before that of their illustrious chief had even been started. In a letter from Jefferson to John Jay dated Paris, Feb. 14, 1787, we read, "The workman who was to make that of General Greene brought me yesterday the medal in gold."¹⁴ This was written after Humphreys' return to America the previous April, and more than two years before the completion of Washington's medal in 1789.

Taking all the circumstances into account, this conduct of Humphreys seems altogether inexplicable, nor is it easy to offer even a plausible conjecture therefor. Leaving out his attachment to Washington, as well as the fact that the medal had been voted long before those to Gates and Greene had even been thought of, and that for an achievement much more brilliant than any of theirs, the other claims of Washington, from every point of view, to supreme recognition should have placed him first and foremost before any other. Why Humphreys thus banished him to the background will never be known. He did begin certain vague negotiations with the famous Duvivier, but after some haggling and wrangling about the amount to be paid, the discussion came to nothing, though Humphreys was finally constrained to allow the artist his price, and the only result was a delay of nearly a

year in beginning the work. In December, 1785, Humphreys went to England for a long stay and left the whole matter, with little regret, in charge of the dilatory and indifferent Jefferson. The latter wrote him from Paris under date of May 7, 1786, "I have received the books and papers you mention and will undertake to have finished what you left undone of the medals, or at least will proceed in it, till the matter shall be put into better hands.

Your friend and servant,

TH. JEFFERSON.¹⁵

In a letter to Jefferson dated "London, Jan. 30, 1786," Humphreys wrote, "Now that there is no obstacle to commencing the medal for Gen. Washington, since Houdon's return" etc.¹⁶ The only connection of Houdon with the medal was through the bust of Washington that he had modelled at Mount Vernon in October, 1785, and which it was somehow understood was to be copied for the medal. From Humphreys' language, it seems that he thought, or pretended to think, that nothing could be done to any part of the medal until the engraver had this bust in his possession. The truth, however, was that the two sides of the work had little to do with each other until their completion, and as the execution of the reverse, with its numerous figures and other features, was far more delicate, difficult and laborious than the bust, it should have been commenced long before that. Thus the suggestion of Humphreys that the absence of Houdon had delayed the progress of the medal was both flimsy and incorrect. The only delay was caused by Humphreys himself, though it is probable he was plentifully helped in his procrastination by Jefferson, who cared little for the medal and did nothing for its progress except under pressure. He was not altogether blind to the merits of Boston, but at the same time all he cared for in the way of art was the Houdon statue and to this he was quite ready to sacrifice the Boston medal. He wrote many letters during 1785 and 1786 to Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia, to John Jay and others about the new enterprise of Houdon and its numerous aspects, but one looks in vain for a single reference to the medal in any of his corre-

spondence. As I have elsewhere stated,¹⁷ The reason of course was that one was voted by "his country" and "my Country," and "the other merely by Congress in behalf of everybody else's country."

Humphreys went back to America in April, 1786, taking with him several swords that had been voted by Congress as honorary gifts. It would be interesting to learn what explanation he offered to Washington — he made a long stay at Mount Vernon soon after his return — as to the extraordinary management by which he had succeeded in delaying still longer a matter that had already been kept too long in abeyance and had secured the engraving of the Greene and Gates medals, while he had abandoned that of Washington to the uncertain supervision of Jefferson.

Before leaving Paris Humphreys seems to have consulted not only Duvivier, but another artist named Gatteaux, and even went so far as to entrust to him the sketch he had received from the Academy, but nothing came of this any more than of the other. This transaction is mentioned in the letter to Jefferson already quoted.

"London, Jan. 30, 1786.

Dear Sir,

Gatteaux, the Engraver, lives in the Street St. Thomas de Louvre opposite the Treasury of the Duke de Chartres. Now that there is no obstacle to commencing the medal for Gen. Washington, since Houdon's return, I could wish (should it not be giving you too much trouble) that you would send for Duvivier, who lives in the Old Louvre, and propose to him undertaking it upon exactly the terms he had offered, which I think were 2400 livres, besides the gold expense of coining. If he should not choose it, we must let it rest until Dupré shall have finished Gen. Greene's. Gatteaux has a paper on which is the description of Gen. Washington's medal.

I am, Dear Sir, etc.,

D. HUMPHREYS.¹⁸

With this recommendation of Humphreys Jefferson evidently complied, though there is nothing but the result to prove it, and

made the necessary agreement with Duvivier. After that he ceased to concern himself with the matter and the medal seems to have been forgotten by every one. It was finished in the spring of 1789 and Jefferson might easily have taken it with him on his departure for home in September of that year, but he evidently did not. In the summer of 1789 it was on exhibition at the annual pageant of the "Académie Royale" among the "gravures" of "M. Duvivier, Graveur général des Monnoies et des Médailles du Roi." With it were two other medals for "le Colonel Washington" and "le Colonel Howard." The former of these two was a kinsman of Washington, son of Bailey Washington, a brave and heroic soldier, who, like Lieut. Colonel Howard, distinguished himself at the battle of the Cowpens and elsewhere. I give in a note the full text of this display of Duvivier's work.¹⁹

At this period Duvivier was 55 years old and in the prime of his faculties. If talent, experience, and intelligent, perpetual devotion to his art went for anything, he was well equipped for the work he undertook, or for any other in his own province. He fully deserved his position as indisputably the first engraver of his day, no slight distinction as the contemporary of Dupré, Galle, Dumarest and Andrieu. He had been a member of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture since 1744 and over a hundred medals bore testimony to his powers.²⁰ This was a record of devotion, skill and diligence that would have been a credit to any artist. The range of his powers as a medallist was unlimited and was founded on early study, broad and deep, no less than on inherited insight, as the son of a distinguished father. As Quatremère de Quincy says, "les ouvrages de M. Duvivier sont recommandables par une rare habileté d'exécution, car on sait qu'il possédait à un degré supérieur l'art de tailler l'acier. Mais plusieurs se recommandent encore par les qualités précieuses, par un goût de composition qui caractérise le style de l'époque et sa tendance de retour vers les principes de l'antique. Nous devons surtout louer M. Duvivier d'avoir connu et respecté les limites de son art, d'avoir su se renfermer fidèlement dans le cercle des convenances que la nature lui prescrit."²¹

As "Graveur du roi," the reign of Louis XV had afforded Duvivier an immense variety of subjects for his burin. The royal coronation and marriage; the American war; the new harbor of Cherbourg; the canal of the Saône; these are but a few of the notable events that he was summoned to eternize in gold or bronze. He even portrayed with exquisite delicacy of touch and marvellous accuracy the façade of Orléans cathedral, with an admirable portrait of Henry IV, and also that of the Ecole Militaire, with the bust of its founder, Louis XV. These all displayed that rare ability for condensing into a small space the broadest and most striking scenes and subjects which was so peculiarly his forte; that faculty which, as Quatremère says, "consiste à réduire aux moindres termes chaque action, chaque image, de manière à faire voir, non la partie insignifiante d'un tout, mais le tout clairement signifié par ce qui n'est que la partie."

Thus richly endowed, thus constituted, and with these lofty ideals, it could hardly be expected that Duvivier would be much in sympathy with the Washington medal, or feel stirred to put forth of his very best in its behalf. He naturally cared little for Boston, a remote and indefinite settlement on the edge of a vast wilderness, and as for its distinguished conqueror, he stood forth but dimly at the best to his artistic sense. Though eminent for his successful portraiture and really more devoted to that than to any other phase of his art, he was not even to enjoy the privilege of taking an original likeness of his illustrious subject, but was to reduce, copy and adapt the bust by Houdon. Nor was the result of his work to originate with himself. He was to do what he could with the sketch provided by the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres; to give artistic form and expression to the work of another, and to infuse into it as much of his own style and peculiar talent as he found possible. This task could not have been sympathetic, and hence, though there are some proofs of his subtle nicety of touch and marvelous facility of execution in the Boston medal, one seeks in vain for the finer effects, the dignity, distinction and skill in composition so characteristic of his best efforts. Its type, motive, sentiment, subject, were all so different

from those of any previous undertaking, that, apart from its lack of originality, the whole effort must have been distasteful to a great degree and no wonder the result was imperfect.²²

For the next ten years after 1789 the history of the medal is a blank and I have not been able to find one single trace of its existence, though I have made a thorough and persistent search, both at home and abroad. It is a perfect mystery and bids fair to remain so. Ordinarily, Duvivier, after the close of the Salon in the fall of 1789, would have delivered the medal to the successor of Jefferson, as minister from the United States, and been paid the amount due him, but I can discover nothing to prove it, not even in the records of the Treasury, though 2400 livres was a goodly sum in those days. The American minister would then naturally intrust it to some responsible agent for transmission to the Secretary of the Treasury, as evidence of the expenditure of the sum that had been given for it, and from him it would be passed on to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who would present it to Washington, either with formal ceremony in the House, or informally by messenger. Of all these presumptions not a sign is apparent, and it is a fair deduction that the medal was simply sent to Mount Vernon by the messenger who took it across the Atlantic, which no one had any right, legal or other, to do. There is no reference to it in any shape in Washington's letters, or other writings, and, so far as can now be discovered, it was soon hidden away in the gloom of that famous "iron chest" in which the Chieftain kept his valuables, and was never taken out until it fell into the hands of his executors.²³

With the exception of the passage on page one from his letter to Humphreys, there is nothing to show that Washington attached much importance to the Boston medal. He certainly did not care enough about it to bequeath it to any person or institution, though in his will he disposed of various swords and other objects of value and interest to relations and friends. The peculiar action of his executors and appraisers evidently reflected his own feeling towards it. It is sad to think that the appraisers estimated its value at \$150 only and that for this sum it was suffered to

become the property of George Steptoe Washington,²⁴ son of Samuel, the shiftless, impecunious, insolvent brother, whom Washington had so often been summoned to help out of the financial quagmires in which he was continually on the verge of being swallowed up.²⁵

Another of the inexplicable problems connected with the medal is the final fate of the die. The query very naturally arises, what has become of it? When Duvivier delivered the medal it was his duty to deliver the die with it, and it was the duty of the receiver to require him to do so before payment. If he did not do so, what was the reason, and is the die still in Paris? If it is still there, it ought to be restored to its rightful owners. If it was given to Washington with the medal, why did he not put it in the iron chest with his other valuables? But there is no trace of it in the inventory. And yet who would be likely to have taken it from its owner? It was not worth stealing, as it could not be disposed of, while it was too valuable to be thrown away as old metal. Altogether it seems doomed to exist only as a memory and as a souvenir of Col. Humphreys' bungling lack of method and shiftless indifference.²⁶

Having reached the end of my investigation, I can only add the trite comment that the result shows how hard the truth is to get at. In this instance it seems even more elusive than usual. From the few facts available we find that the evolution of the medal was at last accomplished with tardy deliberation and no enthusiasm on the part of those to whom it had been entrusted; that the medal, in some inscrutable way, was apparently transferred from Paris to Mount Vernon, and that it was then suffered to dwindle into premature and undeserved oblivion, whence it did not emerge for over half a century. It may well be doubted whether any similar occurrence ever happened, and when one reflects on the event the medal was intended to commemorate and its national importance, as well as on the great distinction of all those connected with both the event and the medal, the poverty of its history must strike every one as extraordinary and inexplicable.

Apart from its historic significance, the medal of itself was an object to take pride in and to portray in terms of praise to one's friends. Unique on this side of the Atlantic; a treasure of art, of skill and richness; fresh from the mint, glowing with virgin beauty, how could even Washington, imperturbable as he was, help rejoicing in its embodied glory and seeking to impart it at least to members of his household or to his guests? Apparently, he imparted the splendors of the medal to no one, either under his own roof, or elsewhere, but on the contrary, kept it apart "as a thing forbid," or under some strange and mortal ban. And such was the attitude towards it of all who had anything to do with it, so invariable was their reticence, so universal the mysterious and portentous avoidance. Why did Washington in all his vast correspondence never mention it after it had come into his possession? Why did Jefferson, Morris, Jay, and the rest ignore it in theirs? Why did Humphreys, forever writing and chattering, omit all reference to it? Why — but one might ask such questions by the score without awakening even the echo of a suggestion, or the ghost of a reminiscence.

Let us be thankful that the medal, though bearing marks of a friction that could have come only from rough handling and irreverent neglect, has at last reached a harbor of refuge, a permanent, fit and conspicuous abode, where we trust it will continue for ages as a symbol of a noble struggle and of a noble victory by a noble man.

This little treatise has been based on the assumption that the Boston medal, now in its Public Library, was actually in the possession of Washington, and was also the original done by Duvivier and exhibited in the Salon of 1789. The former of these statements must be admitted as beyond dispute, though there is not a shred of any but circumstantial evidence to support it. However, an article, vaguely described as "a gold medal of General Washington," was apparently found among the valuables kept by him in an "iron chest" and sworn to by the appraisers as a part of his personal estate; the same medal became the property of George Steptoe Washington after his uncle's death and remained

in his family until its purchase by certain citizens of Boston; moreover, its identity is endorsed by its agreement with the description given by Col. Humphreys in the letter to Washington above quoted.

In view of these cohesive and infallible links, the claim of the medal in question to have actually been in the possession of Washington must be conceded, in spite of the strange and inexplicable lack of more decisive proof from its former owner.

As to the latter of the above statements much can be said on the opposite side.

In the first place there are many plausible, not to say well-founded, reasons, to infer that the medal may have remained in Paris for a long time, possibly for years, after its completion, and till near the close of Washington's life. After Jefferson had taken his final departure from Paris, leaving the medal to shift for itself, when he might so easily have taken it with him, there was absolutely no one, either at home or abroad, to look after it; to see that the artist was paid and his work delivered. Humphreys was far too busy operating for his appointment as minister to Portugal to concern himself about anybody, or anything, else. Jefferson's successor felt even less interest in the matter than Jefferson himself. Moreover the United States treasury was nearly bankrupt in face of the numerous and steadily increasing claims upon it and in no condition to pay even such a sum of 2400 livres; nor was the treasurer in a condition to thank any minister to France who should urge such a demand upon him, and, as I have said, a careful examination of the early national accounts fails to reveal the payment of any such sum at any time.

In addition to these facts, one should call to mind the steadily waning popularity of Washington, which at last, as I have already mentioned, developed into popular detestation, curses and frantic abuse, so that if payment for the medal could have been delayed, or even stopped altogether, the act would have met with general approval.

In Paris affairs were in such a state as to offer little aid to any undertaking whatever, foreign or domestic. By the year 1790 the

French Revolution could well be foreseen, with its relentless and destructive maelstrom of chaos, ruin and death. Duvivier had been a prosperous man, like his father before him, but he was one of thirteen children and by the time he had reached his fiftieth year was provided with a goodly array of poor relations, in addition to his own family. In 1793 he was suddenly and ruthlessly turned out of his office as *graveur du roi*, and thus when well advanced in age, was again forced to face the world with more responsibilities than ever, while his savings had been largely consumed in that infernal holocaust, and his present earnings were represented by tons of worthless assignats. What wonder if, with both the medal and the die in his possession, he should have decided to appropriate the former and substitute another of baser metal! It would hardly seem improbable and certainly not impossible under the circumstances, all the more that his former position would make such a coup perfectly feasible and very unlikely to be detected. It was thus as a kind of *dernier ressort*, a forlorn hope, that he clung to the die, being far sighted enough to detect the dawn of coming disaster and a chance of salvation when all else had failed. This surmise may not be capable of proof, but it has, at least, the germs of truth. Though not a "primordial and incontestable fact," to use the compact formula of Matthew Arnold, it is certainly open to profuse, argumentative expansion. It is merely offered as a possibility, with the farther suggestion that it is supported, to a certain extent, by the present state, color, weight and general aspect of the medal, though these may doubtless be partly attributed to hard experiences in the past and to the friction of rough and inappreciative hands.

NOTES

1. Washington Mss. Department of State.

2. "My success," writes the Chevalier, "has equalled and even surpassed my expectations. Not only has the public received the work with favor, but it has succeeded perfectly at court, especially with the King and Queen who have praised it highly." — Letter to Franklin at Paris, June 21, 1786.

In his reply, dated 17th of April, 1787, from Philadelphia, Franklin says nothing about the poem, which is not surprising considering his feeling towards Humphreys.

The Chevalier was a volunteer officer in our Revolutionary Army and a friend of Franklin's.

3. Jefferson writes to John Jay,

"Paris, March 5, 1786.

"Col. Humphreys, Secretary of Legation, being about to return home in April, I think it my duty to bear witness to his ready, able and faithful discharge of all his duties." To this was added a statement that "his talents and disposition might be available for future use."

A month later Jefferson again takes up the pen in behalf of the Colonel in a letter to James Monroe,

"Paris, May 10, 1786.

"I must beg to recommend Col. Humphreys to your acquaintance and good offices. He is an excellent man and an able one and in need of some provision."

4. From a letter to Charles Thomson, Perpetual Secretary to Congress, dated "Philadelphia, 29th Nov., 1788." These words give the result of the writer's own observation of Col. Humphreys and his operations in France for nearly a year.

5. Humphreys has left on record a specimen of his critical faculties which reveals the poverty of his equipment. This was his comment on the design for the medal. Writing to Washington from Paris in May, 1785, he says "I think it has the character of simplicity and

dignity which is to be aimed at in a memorial of this kind." Only this and nothing more! A singularly thin, barren and futile estimate, as of one who "damned with faint praise" because he knew nothing else to say and was afraid to commit himself. Humphreys was clearly "the most senseless, fit man" for his place and he received the appointment, both of Secretary and otherwise, merely because of that extensive and irresistible "pull" on every public character from Washington down which I have already mentioned, being a man who was always as Jefferson wrote, "in need of some provision." He was certainly one to whom no "provision" came amiss, and he continued thus omnivorous to the last.

6. Franklin was much interested in medals generally, as every reader of his life is aware, and was an authority on the subject. The famous medal he had designed after the surrender of Cornwallis and had presented to the King will recur to everyone. At this very time, May 10, 1785, he wrote about others to John Jay, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, but not a word concerning the Boston memorial. It was Franklin who designed the seal with the motto "Salus in Simplicis," — "Safety in Simplicity," which was engraved for him by Dupré in the spring of 1783.

I do not find the name of Franklin in any one of Humphreys' numerous letters.

Franklin left Paris for home in July, 1785, and was thus ten months in that city after the advent of Humphreys. Adams was there until May, 1785, when he left to become Minister of England. There were eight months during which he might have proffered his aid to Humphreys. Jefferson was in France from August, 1784, until September, 1789, but the help he gave was both little and reluctant.

7. It was fortunate for the peace of mind of this fond and ambitious grandparent that he did not live to read the judgment pronounced on the sole descendant that bore his name by another "Boston boy," Rev. Edward Everett Hale, who styled him "a man of very small calibre; nothing alas! but the grandson of his grandfather. He was neither an American nor an Englishman. He was very nearly nothing, but, I suppose, like most nothings, more conceited than the greatest." Mr. Hale also termed him "a slow coach, honest, earnest, proud, opinionated, laborious, fussy, an unmethodical muddler, an incompetent editor and uncommonly dilatory in his habits." See letter from Dr. Hale in the "Report of the Joint Committee on the Library, U. S. Senate, May 1, 1882." This leads very naturally to the inference that there may, perchance, be a word to say in defence of the Congressional ingratitude. It is quite possible that some few of the many flaws eventually revealed in this "one entire and perfect chrysolite" of Franklin may have been suspected, or perchance disclosed, and that their existence

may have tended to neutralize even the long and distinguished services of his grandfather, and thus apparent injustice was not such rank injustice after all. *Magna est veritas et praevalet*. Wm. Temple Franklin's treatment of his grandfather's autobiography goes far to show his characteristic qualities and the exact amount of his gratitude and regard for his memory.

8. As Jedidiah Morse has truly remarked in his admirable "Life of Jefferson," when treating of his ministry in Paris, "The ancient monarchies of Europe knew little and cared less about the parvenu republics of a distant continent." The French Academy in every branch was thoroughly impregnated with the same feeling.

9. The name of Washington suffered much at the hands of the French playwrights, who were eager to exploit his career, and still more from the actors, to whom both the "W" and the "sh" were naturally stumbling blocks. The wildness of their pronunciation may be inferred, and thus the popular ignorance on this head was increased, but they never gave it a thought, any more than they did to the absurd farrago of complicated nonsense which from time to time they were called upon to present to the public as chapters from the great Liberator's life. To the friends of the rising spirit of liberty that was then abroad, Washington proved a most fortunate and available trouvaille, but to the great majority he was simply a type, an ideal abstraction, a name to conjure with, and they cared nothing for the cold and genuine facts of his career, which would have only served to blight the public enthusiasm. Hence it was not necessary that the various plots should even be "founded on fact" and no one felt surprised at the advent on the stage of Washington's son, "Vazington fils," as he appeared in 1785 in "Asgill, drame en cinq actes, par J. S. le Barbier-le-Jeune," also in "La Liberté du Nouveau Monde" by M. de Sauvigny, which was presented for the first time at the Théâtre de la Nation, July 13, 1791, as well as in numerous other plays, even as late as 1815. In the one last mentioned, "Vazington" says:

"J'ai rempli les devoirs d'un citoyen fidèle,
Et si quelque succès a couronné mon zèle,
Je le dois aux guerriers dont l'héroïque ardeur
De mes nobles travaux a partagé l'honneur."

With such effective aid from the stage, it is hardly surprising that the name of Washington was generally misspelt by the public, though it must be admitted that they were surpassed by the "Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres," which fairly carried off the palm for fantastic, elaborate and reckless distortion.

10. Humphreys was apparently the sole author of this scheme for promoting the Washington medal and "giving it a good send-off," as it were. At least, I can find nothing to the contrary, and it sounds like

him, though Lafayette lent his aid to it. It certainly had a grand and plausible air and Humphreys doubtless thought it a wonderfully happy hit, but it was not a success, and Lafayette would have done better to advise him to apply to Duvivier at the outstart.

11. It is worthy of note that the bust on the Washington medal does not represent him as he appeared at the time of the capture of Boston, but nine years later, when the work of Houdon was done. His features and expression had undergone a considerable change during that period. This is plain to anyone who compares the Houdon bust with the miniature likeness taken in 1777 by C. W. Peale and now in the Huntington Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, or with the full length portrait in oil painted in 1779 by the same artist at the request of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania and now belonging to Mr. Thomas McKean. This was considered by Dr. Craik "a most faithful likeness of him as he appeared in the prime of his life."

12. Jefferson, who was an accomplished scholar, made use of "primum" in this sense when preparing his inscription for the pedestal of Houdon's statue of Washington at the time of its completion in Paris, but he limited the word entirely to his concise epitome of Washington's military career and did not apply it in reference to the general military annals of the country. As Jefferson could not have had a chance to peruse the records of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, it is odd that he should have hit upon the same phrase it had first adopted for the Boston medal. On the front side, of course, appeared the name of Washington, and on the others these inscriptions, —

On the first, "Hostibus primum fugatis," referring to the evacuation of Boston.

On the second, "Hostibus iterum devictis," that is, the capture of the Hessians at Trenton.

On the third, "Hostibus ultimum debellatis," that is, the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

In the first phrase "primum" is plainly intended to signify "for the first time," that is in Washington's military history. In the second phrase "iterum" means the second time," and in the third phrase "ultimum," "the last time."

I may here suggest that as Humphreys undoubtedly allowed Jefferson to see the final form of the legend on the medal, it is strange the latter did not call attention to the poor quality of its Latin and propose an improvement.

13. Charles Saunier in his "Augustin Dupré" favors his readers with a description of the making of the Boston medal, which I venture to

cite on account of its numerous and reckless errors and as an interesting example of the French indifference to historical, or any other, truth and of the national distaste for careful investigation.

Benjamin Franklin was charged with the execution of the decrees of Congress. The philosopher knew Dupré. He lived at Passy and Dupré owned a little country house near there at Auteuil, rue Boileau. Both were early risers. Every morning Dupré betook himself to Paris by the Cours-la-Reine, smoking his pipe. He used to meet Franklin, who took this route. Some occasion brought them together and the engraver and philosopher became friends. In 1778 Dupré engraved a seal for Franklin with this device "In Simplicis Salus"* [sic], but in spite of these relations it was not to him that he addressed himself for the execution of the first medals. With a pusillanimity peculiarly American, he went to the popular notorieties, to Benjamin Duvivier, member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture and "Graveur général des Monnaies." It was he who executed the medal voted by Congress to Washington for the evacuation of Boston, a medal of skillful workmanship, but without the least inspiration, imagination or genius.

*Now in the Public Library of Boston.

14. Letters of Jefferson, Vol. II, No. 107, p. 2, Department of State.

15. Letters from Jefferson, 1st series, Vol. 2, p. 54, Department of State.

16. Letters to Jefferson, series 2, Vol. 40, No. 5, Department of State.

17. Historic Side-Lights, p. 268.

18. Letters to Jefferson, series 2, Vol. 40, No. 5, Department of State. The expression, "The Street St. Thomas de Louvre," shows how little aptitude the writer had for acquiring the French language.

19. Gravures.

Par M. Duvivier, Graveur général des Monnoies and des Médailles du Roi.

319 Cadre renfermant les objets suivans.

No. 1. Pont de Louis XVI.

2. Travaux de la Rade de Cherbourg.

3. Etablissement de la Manufacture Royale d'Horlogerie.

4. Buste de M. Necker.

5. Buste de M. Bailly.

6. Buste du Général Washington, et au revers, Evacuation de Boston, 1776.

7 & 8. Médailles pour le Colonel Washington and le Colonel Howard. Ces 3 Médailles sont pour les Etats-Unis de l'Amérique

9. Différens Jetons d'Académies and autres. Explication des Peintures, Sculptures et Gravures de Messieurs de l'Academic Royale, 1789. p. 54.

20. A complete list of his works is given by Emile Bellier de la Chavignérie in his "Dictionnaire Général des Artistes de l'Ecole Française," Paris, 1882.

Nagle says, in his "Neues Allegemeines Kunstler-Lexicon," "Duvivier's works reveal a skillful draughtsman and designer, familiar with the technical dexterity of a sculptor, happy in invention and no less so in the expression of his heads." These qualities must have tended to make his work on the Washington medal still more irksome than it would otherwise have been.

21. Institut Royal de France. Académie Royale des Beaux arts. Notice Historique sur la Vie et les Ouvrages de M. Duvivier. Par M. Quatremère de Quincy, Secrétaire perpetuel. Lue a la Séance publique du 6 Oct., 1821."

22. Washington was not a greater source of inspiration to Houdon than to Duvivier. The work of each was a job, a financial stopgap, and not alluring. No one would think of calling the former's statue a great work. It is grandiose, authentic, faithful, deadly lifelike, while plainly lacking in vigor and freedom of modelling, in latent force, in distinctive character and inner light; on the whole the inadequate outcome of over two years' hard work. How far inferior to Houdon's Voltaire, or to St. Bruno, that silent monolith of spiritual dignity and grandeur! What a congestion of symbolic impedimenta encumbers it! And then those alien legs! The head is the head of Washington, but the legs are the legs of Gouverneur Morris, one of which, alas! was wooden, like the whole figure. Fortunately, Washington never saw it.

Oddly enough, at the very time — May 14, 1790 — when it was placed on its pedestal (though without the least pretense of ceremony or even a word in the papers) the whole country was resounding with the vilest execration of Washington, of his policy, and even of his personal character. He was held up to contempt as "Montezuma," and, as he himself wrote to Jefferson in July of that year, "every act of my administration was tortured and the grossest and most insidious misrepresentations of them made, and that, too, in such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket." In February the House even refused its customary tribute of a half-hour's adjournment in order to call on him on his birthday.

23. While collecting the materials for her valuable work on the "Portraits of Washington," Mrs. Elizabeth Bryant Johnson made great exertions towards tracing the history of the medal during the ten years above mentioned but, I understand, without the least success.

24. George Steptoe was also a legatee and received one of his Uncle's swords besides.

25. "In God's name, how did my brother Samuel contrive to get himself so enormously in debt?" Thus wrote Washington to his brother, John Augustine, "Newburgh, 16 Jan., 1783," about a year after Samuel's death at the age of 47. As the latter had induced five women to marry him, in the course of 23 years, poor as he was, this may have had something to do with his impecuniosity. Five wives tend to impoverish any man, however surviguous, and might even promote his early and happy despatch.

The above exclamation well illustrates Washington's forcible utterance, when laboring under momentary excitement. Landor, in the "Conversation between Washington and Franklin," makes him say of St. Augustine, "Oh, the knave!" apropos of the latter's sly dab at the Trinity.

26. The official inventory of Washington's estate includes 22 items, as the contents of the iron chest in which were kept bonds and mortgages, stock certificates and other valuables. Among these were "1 gold box presented by the Corporation of New York, \$100." Also "1 gold medal of St. Patrick Society, \$8." Also "1 large gold medal of George Washington, \$150." These two medals are the only ones of gold in the chest. The description of the Boston medal is singularly brief and indefinite, and the appraisers would seem to have been as ignorant of its origin and its historic significance, as they were of its value merely as so much metal. Their names were Thomas Mason, Tobias Lear, Thomas Peter and Wm. Foote. Whatever may be said of the others, it seems hardly possible that Tobias Lear, for nearly fifteen years Washington's secretary and intimate friend, could have been so ignorant, indifferent and faithless as is shown by their sworn estimate. It should be said, however, that the gold box presented by the city of New York was as much undervalued as the Boston medal, though some attempt was made to describe it correctly.

